

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A master processing apparatus for use with a pair of removable feed rolls, each carrying a supply of stock material to be unwound, at least one of the stock materials having a layer of adhesive provided thereon, said apparatus comprising:

a frame including a first frame portion and a second frame portion movably connected for movement relative to one another between open and closed positions;

a pair of cooperating pressure applying structures mounted within said frame, said cooperating structures being constructed and arranged to be positioned adjacent one another in a cooperating pressure applying relationship wherein, when the master with the first and second stock materials on opposing sides thereof and with the adhesive contacting the master is positioned between said cooperating structures, said cooperating structures apply pressure to said master and stock materials as they pass therebetween so as to affect adhesive bonding between said master and said stock materials;

one of said pair of cooperating pressure applying structures being mounted on the first frame portion and the other of said pair of cooperating pressure applying structures being mounted on the second frame portion such that (a) movement of the frame portions into their open positions moves the pressure applying structures apart from one another into an open access position to facilitate positioning of the stock materials therebetween and (b) movement of the frame portions into their closed positions moves the pressure applying structures into engagement with one another and into pressure applying engagement with the portion of the stock materials positioned therebetween; and

guide structure providing a guide surface constructed and arranged to guide the movement of the pressure applying structures into the engaged position thereof.

2. A master processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a locking mechanism mounted between the first and second frame portions and movable between (a) a locking position in which said locking structure holds the first and second frame portions in their closed positions with respect to one

another and thereby holds the pressure applying structures in engagement with one another and with the portion of the stock materials therebetween as aforesaid and (b) an unlocked position in which the first and second frame portions are released from locked engagement with one another to allow said first and second frame portions to be moved into their open positions with respect to one another to move the pressure applying structures apart as aforesaid.

3. A master processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said pair of pressure applying structures comprises a first nip roller mounted to said first frame portion and a second nip roller mounted to said second frame portion.

4. A master processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said first and second frame portions are pivotally connected for movement between said open and closed positions.

5. A master processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said guide structure includes a pair of guide tracks on one of said frame portions and a pair of guide projections on the other of said frame portions, each projection being movably received within a respective guide track.

6. A master processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said first frame portion includes a pair of opposing walls, each said guide track being formed in a respective one of said opposing walls, and wherein each projection is formed on said second frame portion.

7. A master processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein each guide track is arcuate.

8. A master processing apparatus according to claim 7, wherein each said guide projection is coaxial with the axis of rotation of said second nip roller, said guide tracks and said guide projections cooperating such that as the frame

portions are moved toward and into their closed position, the guide tracks guide the guide projections to thereby guide the nip rollers toward and into parallel uniform pressure applying engagement with one another and with the stock material.

9. A master processing apparatus according to claim 8, wherein each said guide projection is biased into engagement with wall surfaces of the associated guide track when the first and second frame portions are in their closed positions to maintain the first and second nip rollers in uniform pressure applying engagement with one another and with stock material as aforesaid.

10. A master processing apparatus for use with a pair of removable feed rolls, each carrying a supply of stock material to be unwound, at least one of the stock materials having a layer of adhesive provided thereon, said apparatus comprising:

a frame including a first frame portion and a second frame portion movably connected for movement relative to one another between open and closed positions, the one of said first and second frame portions including a guide surface spaced from the movable connection between said first and second frame portions, the other of said first and second frame portions having a guide portion engageable with said guide surface; and

a pair of cooperating pressure applying structures mounted within said frame, said cooperating structures being constructed and arranged to be positioned adjacent one another in a cooperating pressure applying relationship wherein, when the master with the first and second stock materials on opposing sides thereof and with the adhesive contacting the master is positioned between said cooperating structures, said cooperating structures apply pressure to said master and stock materials as they pass therebetween so as to affect adhesive bonding between said master and said stock materials;

one of said pair of cooperating pressure applying structures being mounted on the first frame portion and the other of said pair of cooperating pressure applying structures being mounted on the second frame portion such that (a) movement of the

frame portions into their open position moves the pressure applying structures apart from one another into an open access position to facilitate positioning of the stock materials therebetween and (b) movement of the frame portions into their closed position moves the pressure applying structures into engagement with one another and into pressure applying engagement with the portion of the stock materials positioned therebetween;

said guide portion and said guide surface being configured to cooperate during movement of said first and second frame portions relative to one another from their open position to their closed position so as to guide the relative movement of said frame portions to align said cooperating structures with one another in their cooperating pressure applying relationship.

11. A master processing apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a locking mechanism mounted between the first and second frame portions and movable between (a) a locking position in which said locking structure holds the first and second frame portions in their closed position with respect to one another and thereby holds the pressure applying structures in engagement with one another and with the portion of the stock materials therebetween as aforesaid and (b) an unlocked position in which the first and second frame portions are released from locked engagement with one another to allow said first and second frame portions to be moved into their open position with respect to one another to move the pressure applying structures apart as aforesaid.

12. A master processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said pair of pressure applying structures comprises a first nip roller mounted to said first frame portion and a second nip roller mounted to said second frame portion.

13. A master processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said first and second frame portions are pivotally connected for movement between said open and closed positions.

14. A master processing apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said guide surface is provided by a pair of guide tracks on said one of said first and second frame portions and said guide portion is provided by a pair of guide projections on the other of said first and second frame portions, each projection being received within a respective guide track.

15. A master processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said first frame portion includes a pair of opposing walls, each said guide track being provided on a respective one of said opposing walls, and wherein each projection is provided on said second frame portion.

16. A master processing apparatus according to claim 15, wherein each said guide projection is coaxial with the axis of rotation of said cooperating structure on said second frame portion.

17. A master processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said guide surface is provided by a pair of arcuate guide tracks on said one of said first and second frame portions and said guide portion is provided by a pair of guide projections on the other of said first and second frame portions, each projection being received within a respective guide track.

18. A master processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said first frame portion includes a pair of opposing walls, each said guide track being provided on a respective one of said opposing walls, and wherein each projection is provided on said second frame portion.

19. A master processing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein each said guide projection is coaxial with the axis of rotation of said cooperating structure on said second frame portion.

20. A master processing apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising a locking mechanism mounted between the first and second frame portions and movable between (a) a locking position in which said locking structure holds the first and second frame portions in their closed position with respect to one another and thereby holds the pressure applying structures in engagement with one another and with the portion of the stock materials therebetween as aforesaid and (b) an unlocked position in which the first and second frame portions are released from locked engagement with one another to allow said first and second frame portions to be moved into their open position with respect to one another to move the pressure applying structures apart as aforesaid.

21. A master processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said pair of pressure applying structures comprises a first nip roller mounted to said first frame portion and a second nip roller mounted to said second frame portion.